

12 May 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEF, POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

SUBJECT: A Proposal that the United States Offer Food to Hungary

1. The idea that the United States offer food to Hungary has been proposed once before approximately six months ago, and a similar proposal that the U.S. alleviate the then existing food shortage in Poland was considered a year ago. It was decided in both cases not to follow through because:

a. It was felt that countries [generally friendly to the United States but] in which broad segments of the population have been suffering from persistent food shortages (India, Italy, etc.), an offer of this kind to a communist country would probably result in an unfavorable public opinion against the United States.

b. If the United States Government made this offer, it would be criticized in the Congress and in part of the U.S. press; and this would tend to negate in the recipient country much of the good-will we had hoped for.

2. These reasons against the proposal remain generally valid. Since it is again being examined, however, it may be worthwhile to define the objectives if the proposal is accepted. Offhand, these are some possible objectives for tendering the offer:

a. The United States Government sincerely wishes to alleviate the food shortage in Hungary.

b. Since American surplus food stocks, some of it perishable, must be disposed of for domestic political reasons, the Congress would not object to sending part of it to a communist country.

c. If Hungary accepts our offer, we would insist that Americans supervise its distribution, and we would use this as a device for procuring covert intelligence.

d. We simply want to make a propaganda gesture and are indifferent whether the Hungarian Government accepts it or not, and in fact we would prefer that they reject our offer.


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4. On balance, however, we believe that regardless of the objective in mind we should not direct an offer to send food to Hungary. Instead, we could send some of our surplus food stocks to Pakistan or India or to any one of several countries friendly to us and then capitalize on this through our propaganda media in Hungary in particular, and in the other satellite countries in general.

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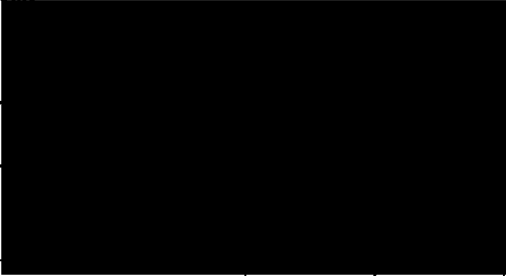
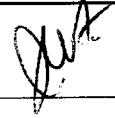


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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

INSTRUCTIONS: Officer designations should be used in the "TO" column. Under each comment a line should be drawn across sheet and each comment numbered to correspond with the number in the "TO" column. Each officer should initial (check mark insufficient) before further routing. This Routing and Record Sheet should be returned to Registry.

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